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Housekeepers' Chat

(Not for Publication)

Thurs., Oct. 27/27

Subject: "Pies for Autumn Desserts."

ANNOUNCEMENT: We shall begin mailing copies of the Radio Cookbook Monday, October 17. However, it will take some time to catch up with the 40,000 requests now on hand, so please notify your listeners to wait at least until November 14, before writing a second time. today's program approved by Bureau of Home Economics. Bulletin available: "Home Baking." An excellent guide to baking all kinds of breads, cakes, pies, etc.

What do you think of the new radio cookbook, in its jazzy green dress? We had an interesting time, choosing the cover. Jimmie Dick was in favor of a pale, seashell, pink. Uncle Ebenezer held out for a somber purple. Fred said he'd like something in a bright red. Any my Next-Door Neighbor suggested that a blue and white tile cover would go best with her kitchen curtains. I considered all their suggestions, very carefully, but I don't mind telling you that I had my mind set on a neat, green cover, long before the book was printed. I've always been partial to green -- must be because I'm Irish. I hope that you will like the book, well enough to write to me about it.

I've just been glancing through the "Pies and Other Pastries" chapter of the cookbook. There are recipes for Apple Pie, Butterscotch Cream Pie, Chocolate Pie, Cream Pie, Custard Pie, Fresh Cherry Pie, Green Tomato Pie, Lemon Meringue Pie, Rhubarb Pie -- more pies than you could shake a stick at -- provided you wanted to shake a stick at a pie. Sometimes one does. Did you ever visit a friend who decided to make her first pie, in your honor? I know all about it. The crust was so tough that you couldn't have cut it with a steak knife, and yet, you had to eat it, or offend your hostess.

The trouble with most inexperienced cooks, is, that when making pie crust, they use warm ingredients, or else they work the dough too long and strenuously, thus developing the gluten in the flour. This makes the pastry tough.

In making rich pastry, all the materials should be mixed cold, so that the fat will not become soft. For ordinary pie-crust pastry, if a hard fat is used, it is better to have the materials at room temperature, or about 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Perhaps you would like to have a recipe, for a plain pie crust, enough for a two-crust pie. There are four ingredients, in a plain pie crust. Write them down, if you like:

About 2-1/2 tablespoons water, or just enough to make a stiff dough
1-1/2 cups sifted, soft-wheat flour
5-1/2 to 7 tablespoons fat, and
1/2 teaspoon salt.

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Better check them, to be sure you have the correct amounts: (Repeat ingredients).

First, sift the flour and the salt together. Then, combine the fat and the flour. Some cooks cut the fat into the flour with two knives, or a pastry fork, or a biscuit cutter, so that the ingredients will not be warmed, by too much handling. However, the best cook I know employs the old-fashioned method of mixing the fat and flour with the tips of her fingers, working very quickly.

When the fat and the flour are mixed, add the water, slowly. Use no more water than is absolutely necessary. Too much water will make a tough product. Flour the pastry board very lightly, lay the dough on it, and roll the dough very lightly. Ordinary pie crust requires but one rolling. Handle it and roll it as little as possible. If the lower crust is baked separately, the oven should be about 450 degrees Fahrenheit. However, a pie with a filling that needs to be cooked, cannot be left long in an oven as hot as this, because the crust bakes too fast for the filling. To cook a pie with a filling, the temperature should be about 450 degrees to start, and then lowered rapidly, after 8 or 10 minutes, so that the filling may cook through, without overcooking the crust.

An ideal pie crust is flaky, light and tender. The flakiness depends largely upon the amount of fat used. Almost any fat may be used. Butter, lard, compound vegetable fats, chicken fat, and the oils, all give good results.

The lightness of a pie depends largely upon the mixing and the rolling, and the tenderness depends upon the flour, and the skill in mixing.

When I planned this program, I meant to give you a number of recipes, for different kinds of pies, to use as autumn desserts. But since the Radio Cookbook has come out, in all its radiant green cover, I've decided to broadcast only one recipe today. They're all in the cookbook, beginning on page 63, and I'll not take your time by broadcasting them. By the way, if you have a good pie recipe, which is not in the cookbook, I'll be glad to have it. You may send it to me in care of Station _____.

I have a question left over from yesterday, about shoes. Here's the question: "Please tell me how street shoes should be dried."

To dry a pair of leather shoes, first, wash off all mud and grit, with lukewarm water. Then oil them, with castor oil. Moisten a piece of cheesecloth, with castor oil, rub it into the leather lightly and evenly, and the shoes will take on a good shine when they're dry. Don't use too much oil, or the shoes will not polish easily. Then stuff the toes with crumpled paper, to keep the shape and speed up the drying. Set the shoes in a place that is not too warm, and let them dry slowly. Never put them close to a hot stove or radiator, and do not wear them, until they are thoroughly dry. It is a good plan to polish street shoes once or twice, as soon as they are dry.

Now, here's another question, about Ice-Box rolls. This really should have come before the shoe question, but I guess it doesn't matter. A number of women have written to me, requesting a recipe for Ice-Box rolls.

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I asked the Recipe Lady about Ice-Box rolls. She says that it is not necessary to have a special recipe for them. The name, "Ice-Box Rolls," indicates simply a convenient way of having fresh, hot rolls when you want them. Any good reliable recipe for yeast-raised rolls may be used. The cold atmosphere of the ice-box retards the action of the yeast in the dough.

Either of two methods may be used. Let the rolls rise almost ready for baking, and put them into the ice-box. They are ready to bake whenever you wish. Or, if you prefer, put the rolls into the ice box, as soon as they are molded, but before they have a chance to rise. Take them out of the ice box, and let them stand in a warm place, long enough to double in bulk, before you put them into the oven for baking. The first method is more convenient, when you want hot rolls for an early breakfast.

Now I shall give you a recipe for Apple Pie. If you have a copy of the Radio Cookbook, you need not copy this recipe. If you do not have a Radio Cookbook, you may want to copy the recipe, so that you can use it soon. Five ingredients, for Apple Pie:

4 to 6 tart cooking apples	1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup sugar	1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons butter	

Five ingredients. Please check them: (Repeat ingredients).

Core and pare the apples and cut in slices or circles. Line a deep pie tin with pastry and pack the apples carefully so that the cover will fit. Sprinkle with the mixed salt, cinnamon, and sugar, and dot with the butter. Place on the upper crust after moistening the lower rim, and press the edges together to hold in the juices. Cut a slit to allow the steam to escape. Bake 30 to 35 minutes at a temperature of 450° F., or until the apples are tender.

With Apple Pie and Cheese for dessert, the rest of your dinner will be easy. For when you have a rich dessert like this one, only light foods are needed in the first course.

Tomorrow I shall give you a number of suggestions for children's breakfasts, planned by the Menu Specialist, of the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics.

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